

HOUSE RESOLUTION 202

By Williams K

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Mapes Piano String Company upon the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pride in recognizing those estimable businesses in Tennessee that have served their customers for generations by establishing a tradition of quality service, a genuine concern for their patrons, and a commitment to their community; and

WHEREAS, the Mapes Piano String Company, a family-owned enterprise in Elizabethton and a world leader in instrument string manufacturing, is now celebrating 100 years of quality wire production, a century of making “strings that ring” for music lovers and professionals alike; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1912 by Stephen Mapes, the Mapes Piano String Company began in the Bronx as a vendor to New York piano manufacturers during the industry’s infancy; acquired by John Adam Schaff in 1918, the company was soon turned over to William George Schaff and has continued under the Schaff family’s stewardship to this day; and

WHEREAS, the company, with its small but capable assembly team of eight men, enjoyed immense success in its early years as a response to booming piano sales in the jazz and ragtime splendor of the Roaring Twenties; and

WHEREAS, this early growth helped the Mapes Piano String Company survive the devastating effects of the Great Depression and World War II, the latter spurring the company to switch from copper to aluminum and eventually devoting its entire production to the stranding and splicing of aircraft cable to support the war effort; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the ingenuity and efficiency of vertical integration, William George Schaff, Jr., the head of Mapes through the 1950s and 1960s, decided to establish the

company's own wire mill so they could produce the highest quality core wire in-house; he chose Elizabethton, Tennessee, as the mill's location because of its strategic proximity to major clients and its cost-efficient electricity rates; and

WHEREAS, he continued to develop the eastern Tennessee mill, capitalizing on its excess capacity with the production of high-carbon steel wire for mechanical spring makers, as well as for the automotive, home construction, music, and defense industries; their mechanical spring wire even made up part of the Space Shuttle and a lunar module, proving just how instrumental the Mapes Piano String Company has been in the making of our Nation's history; and

WHEREAS, the factory's notable success prompted the Schaff family to relocate all operations to Tennessee in 1971, and it has since grown from a single building to a 200,000-square-foot complex, employing approximately 200 workers; and

WHEREAS, the Mapes Piano String Company specializes in a number of high quality products, including finished strings for guitar, banjos, and mandolins, fretted instrument strings sold under well-known brands, speciality core and wrap wire for the best string makers in the industry, and custom piano strings for almost any piano made in the last 200 years; and

WHEREAS, constantly inventing new methods to improve production, the company boasts six registered patent trademarks for various wire types of unique structural and sonic properties, has earned certifications for continuous improvement and systems management from the International Organization for Standardization, and, through the power of cutting-edge technology, innovations in the field of chemistry, and the experienced craftsmanship of Mapes employees, provides products perfectly designed to suit every customer's exact specifications; and

WHEREAS, the Mapes Piano String Company has maintained its commitment to its Tennessee workforce, nurturing generations of craftsmen and remaining a constant source of support and hope in these trying economic times; and

WHEREAS, the company's longstanding tradition of quality production will continue for many more years, thanks to the care of Bill Schaff, his brothers, Frank and Bob, and his three children, Mark, Regina, and Stephanie; and

WHEREAS, as the Mapes Piano String Company celebrates its rich history of 100 years of signature wire manufacturing, it is appropriate to honor the many employees and company leaders, both past and present, who have used their time, talent, and resources to serve their community and fellow man; and

WHEREAS, the Mapes Piano String Company is most assuredly worthy of this General Assembly's recognition and approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and congratulate the Mapes Piano String Company upon the occasion of its 100th anniversary, thank its many employees for their invaluable contributions to their community, and extend to them our best wishes for many more years of continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.